Arizona Department of Education

The Grader

In This Issue

FY16 Guidance on Test Participation Requirements:

Arizona offers six different End of Course (EOC) tests to measure English/Language Arts and Mathematics standards required for credit toward high school graduation. All students enrolled in courses intended to provide students with their first three years of high school English credit or high school math credit are expected to participate in the appropriate AzMERIT EOC test regardless of the student's grade/cohort or whether high school credit is actually earned for the course. Additionally, students retaking any such courses are expected to retake the appropriate AzMERIT EOC test. Withholding an assessment or failing to reassess students who complete courses aligned to state standards may have numerous implications related to school accountability as well as students' ability to show academic improvement and growth. As Arizona's accountability system evolves under ESSA as well as new state legislative requirements proposed under SB1430 and other impactful state legislation, valid and reliable measures of annual academic performance ensure that schools, educators, and students can be credited with:

95% Tested

Arizona's ESEA flexibility request, which expires in August 2016, describes the method in which Arizona holds schools accountable for test participation on the state assessment; in the 2014-2015 school year, only one AzMERIT test administration was available to students. By the 2015-2016 school year, students can bank up to two assessments to indicate whether they are on-track and/or exposed to the high school curriculum required for graduation. Cohort 2018 in the 2016-2017 school year will be Arizona's first opportunity to utilize all EOC tests to ensure exposure to the state academic standards required for high school graduation. Regardless of specialized programming and/or participation, all subsequent cohorts that participate in EOC tests indicate some level of preparation for the knowledge, skills, and/or abilities required of Arizona high school graduates.

FY16 Guidance on Test Participation Requirements (Continued on Page 2)

Academic improvement

For educators and schools which teach the content aligned to the End of Course test, students who fail to reassess when retaking a course required for high school graduation cannot demonstrate their academic improvement. While proficiency rates decreased among schools statewide, a change in scale scores from year to year has been used to indicate growth for students, educators, and schools alike. Given the higher academic standards measured by AzMERIT, a lack of initial assessment and also reassessment for students retaking a course limits the ability to infer a school's effectiveness using growth as a proxy in lieu of proficiency.

Credit for level of proficiency

The development of Arizona's new accountability system provides the opportunity to reconsider how achievement results on different types of assessments might be used. Achievement levels on AzMERIT specifically credit students for their level of proficiency relative to the grade level standards tested. Absence of assessment data for students who complete curriculum aligned to EOC tests prevents the inclusion of partial proficiency results. In fact, several state accountability systems throughout the country mindfully reward partial credit for partial proficiency and higher credit for higher levels of proficiency rather than the previous all-or-nothing implementation of AIMS achievement in Arizona's former accountability system. In the development of Arizona's new A-F system, schools and districts have the opportunity to realign "achievement" profiles to the higher standards measured by AzMERIT when such census data exists for its students and educators.

Research-based policy recommendations

Through the 2017-2018 school year, proficiency on ELA/Mathematics standards as measured by the state assessment cannot be a high school graduation requirement. ADE works with other states which offer similar testing options in high school but with more statutory and policy structures in place to ensure comparability between schools and across years. ADE will compare data from tests administered in the 2015-2016 school year to tests administered in the 2014-2015 school year to identify extreme variability in test participation in the absence of State Board Rule or statutory requirements typically associated with high stakes testing. ADE will use this information to help inform policy which threatens validity of the state's accountability system.

Alternative Schools List Coming Soon

The 2015-2016 Alternative Schools List will be available before June. Once it has been posted, you can find it by navigating from the Main Page of the ADE website to the Accountability Page, selecting State Accountability, then the Alternative Schools List tab or by clicking here. Please contact Achieve@azed.gov for any questions specific to alternative status for your school.

Dropout Tracker Report in AzEDS

The Dropout Tracker Report lists students who have withdrawal codes: W4, W5, S4, and S5. The Dropout Tracker Report for FY2016 is still available in Common Logon. It is currently being moved (with the expectation of full implementation/access for FY17) to AzEDS (and can be accessed through ADEConnect AzEDS Portal shown below). At this time many districts can access the Dropout Tracker in AzEDS. Once formally in AzEDS the report name is STUD79; in Common Logon the report is still named SDADMS79.

State Bottom 25% Technical Assistance

The State Bottom 25% Technical Assistance Worksheet is a tool entities can use to estimate the percentage of students at their school/LEA which fall in the state's Bottom 25%. This worksheet is not intended for use in high-stakes accountability. This tool can help schools identify changes in student achievement over years across different statewide assessments within subject area and by grade level. The State Bottom 25% Technical Assistance Worksheet is designed to populate automatically once testing data has been copied into the format. The worksheet follows the same formatting used by the various assessments. AIMS data can be accessed through ADEConnect and AzMERIT data can be garnered through the Vendor (American Institutes for Research; AIR) files which were sent directly to LEAs. The state scale scores for the 25th percentile by grade level for AIMS (FY14) and AzMERIT (FY15) is as follows:

Scale Score at the 25th Percentile Statewide

Mathematics	Scale Score at the 25th Percentile		ELA/Reading	Scale Score at the 25th Percentile	
Grade	FY 2015 AzMERIT	FY 2014 AIMS	Grade	FY 2015 AzMERIT	FY 2014 AIMS
3	3492	337	3	2479	431
4	3524	346	4	2495	450
5	3555	364	5	2509	468
6	3588	379	6	2518	478
7	3605	397	7	2527	489
8	3633	406	8	2539	494
Algebra I\H.S. (AIMS)	3644	474	ELA 9\H.S. 10 (AIMS)	2539	674
Geometry\H.S. (AIMS)	3656	474	ELA 10\H.S. 10 (AIMS)	2547	674
Algebra II\H.S. (AIMS)	3669	474	ELA 11\H.S. 10 (AIMS)	2549	674

State Bottom 25% Technical Assistance (Continued)

On the following page is an example of the State Bottom 25% Technical Assistance Worksheet with sample populations. In this example in Fiscal Year 2014, 39% of third grade students fell into the state bottom 25% for AIMS Reading, for Fiscal Year 2015, 50% of third graders at this entity fell into the state bottom 25%, making an overall difference in state BQ percentage of 11.36%. The Technical Worksheet displays this as a positive number in the red; more students are falling in the state bottom 25% from one fiscal year to the next over the two assessments. In mathematics, for Fiscal Year 2014, 32% of third graders fell into the state bottom 25% in AIMS, for Fiscal Year 2015, AzMERIT 24% of third graders at this entity were in the state bottom quartile. The difference in state BQ percentage is –8.01%. The worksheet displays this number as a negative and highlights the difference in green to demonstrate a decrease in the number of third graders in the state bottom 25% for this entity across years and assessments.

AIMS Reading Number of Students	AIMS Reading State BQ%	AIMS / AzMerit Grade Level	AzMERIT ELA Number of Students	AzMERIT ELA State BQ%	Difference in State BQ Percentage
17	39%	3	21	50%	11.36%
12	32%	4	21	53%	20.07%
15	32%	5	16	39%	7.11%
16	36%	6	21	44%	7.39%
0	0%	7	0	0%	0.00%
0	0%	8	0	0%	0.00%
0	0%	10 / 9	0	0%	0.00%
		10	0	0%	
		11	0	0%	
0	0%	HS Sub Total	0	0%	0.00%
60	35%	ALL	79	46%	11.32%

AIMS Math Number of Students	AIMS Math State BQ%	AIMS / AzMerit Grade Level	AzMERIT Math Number of Students	AzMERIT Math State BQ%	Difference in State BQ Percentage
14	32%	3	10	24%	-8.01%
9	24%	4	15	38%	13.18%
12	26%	5	8	20%	-6.02%
18	41%	6	16	33%	-7.58%
0	0%	7	0	0%	0.00%
0	0%	8	0	0%	0.00%
0	0%	10 / Algebra I	0	0%	0.00%
		Geometry	0	0%	
		Algebra II	0	0%	
0	0%	HS Sub Total	0	0%	0.00%

Note: A positive value indicates an increase in students in the State BQ from the prior year.

Note: A negative value shows a decline in the percentage of students in the State BQ from the prior year.

ELA — AIMS Reading State BQ%, AzMERIT ELA State BQ%

Math
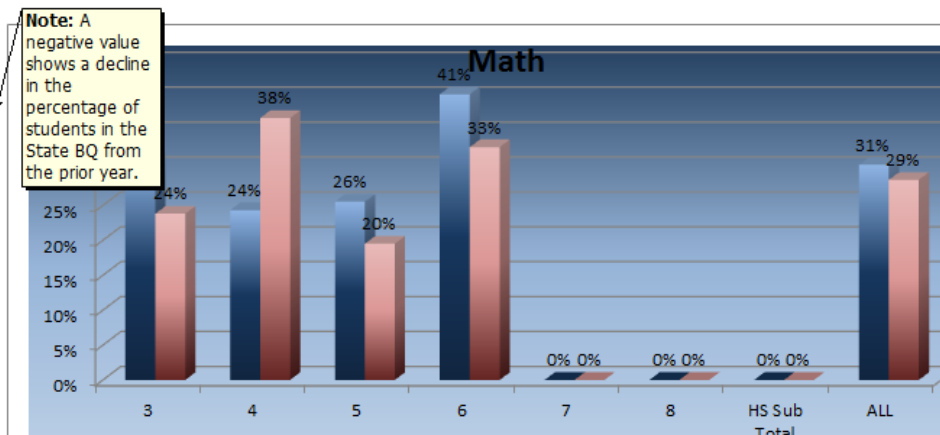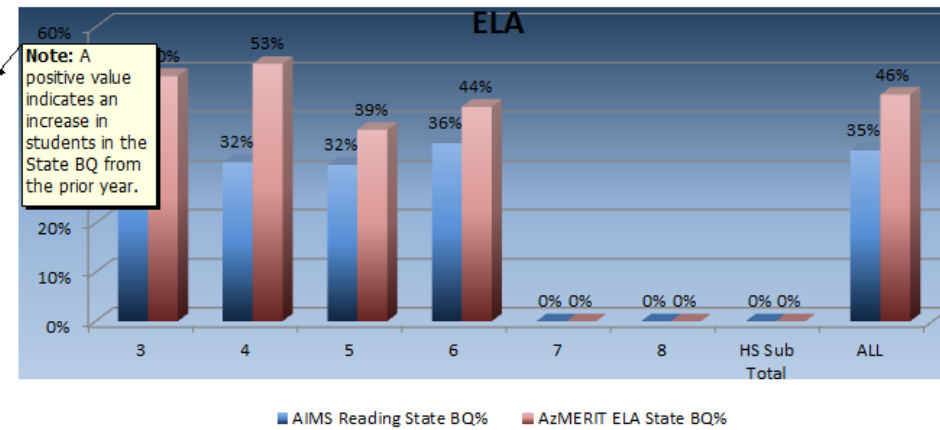
College and Career Ready Index (CCRI) Data for 2015 Now Available

Schools can now access CCRI reports for 2015 through ADEConnect. To reach ADEConnect click here and select the ADEConnect portal. Information on how to find, download, and print CCRI reports can be found in the ADEConnect guide. This information is part of the criteria to evaluate school performance during the accountability transition. Each score reflects the alternative and/or traditional status of a school for the 2014-2015 school year (not the current application window for the 2015-2016 school year).
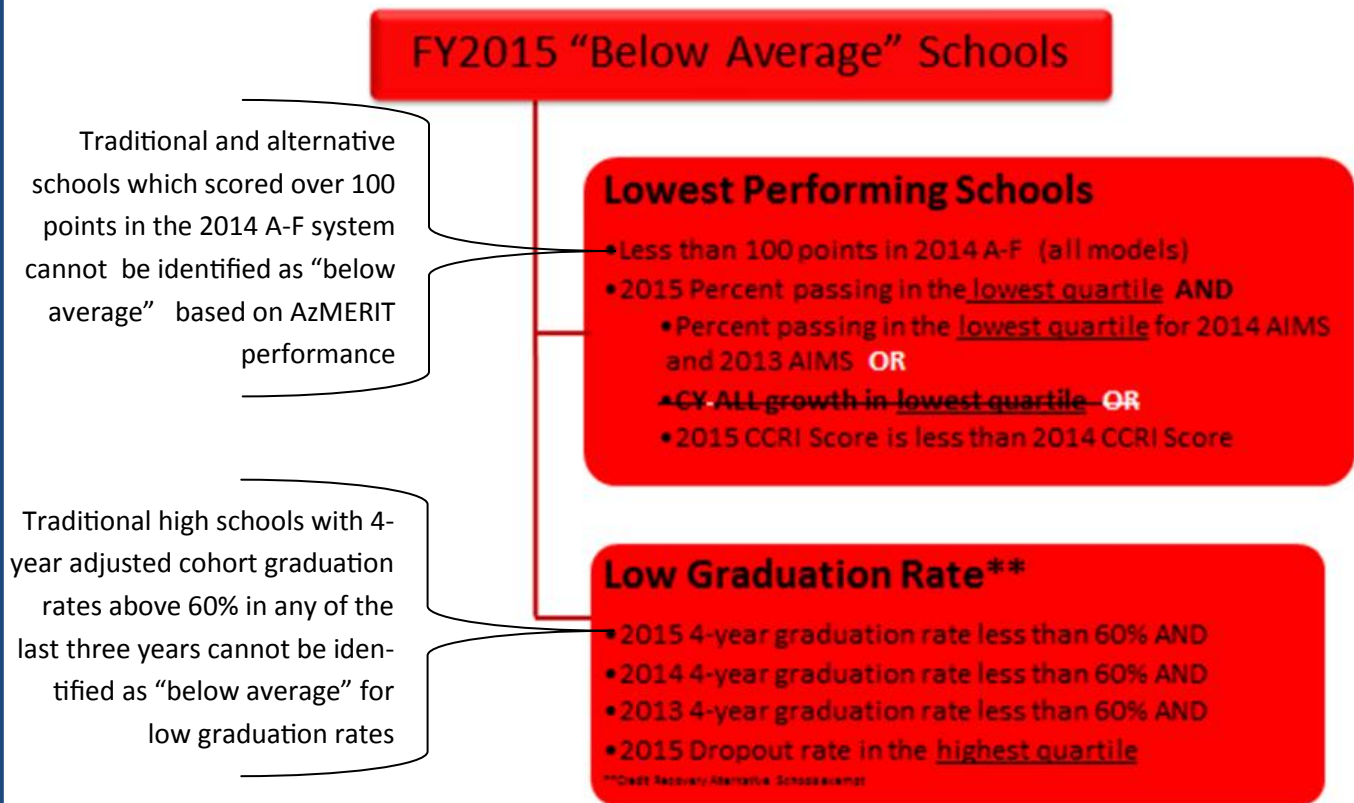
Accountability CCRI Profile Summary

Report Parameters

District:	School:	Fiscal Year: 2015

Back to Report

Profile Summary

2015 4-year Grad Rate	88.84
2013 4-year Grad Rate	93.41
2014 4-year Grad Rate	91.3
2015 5-year Grad Rate	92.52
2015 6-year Grad Rate	94.08
2015 7-year Grad Rate	92.11
2015 CCRI Score	30
2015 Persistence Rate	0.96

Indefinite Delay of SGP Data for 2014-2015 AzMERIT Results

ADE has delayed indefinitely the issuing of any student growth percentile (SGP) scores based on the Spring 2015 AzMERIT assessment.

ADE engages and will continue to engage with national and local experts on both the policy and technical requirements related to accountability for student growth. ADE wants to ensure students, parents, teachers, principals, and all other stakeholders receive statistically defensible estimates of student growth based on Arizona's new statewide assessment. ADE will release more information regarding the availability of a student growth measure based on AzMERIT results as it becomes available.

Although the previous A-F Letter Grade Accountability System required a student growth measure, the transitional accountability system does not require the calculation of SGP to identify and support low performing schools. Instead, schools can be identified as having a "below average level of performance" based on multiple years of the lowest student achievement statewide. ADE's Accountability, Support, and Innovation staff will notify any school which needs to submit a new or updated school improvement plan as required by ARS 15-241 if they meet the remaining criteria for "below average" identification and support. The figure on the following page demonstrates how the lack of SGP data impacts the transitional accountability criteria (also known as "Priority" identification) and further details how each fiscal year of data is used in the determination.

FY2015 "Below Average" Schools

Traditional and alternative schools which scored over 100 points in the 2014 A-F system cannot be identified as "below average" based on AzMERIT performance

Lowest Performing Schools
- Less than 100 points in 2014 A-F (all models)
- 2015 Percent passing in the lowest quartile AND
  - Percent passing in the lowest quartile for 2014 AIMS and 2013 AIMS OR
  - ~~CY ALL growth in lowest quartile~~ OR
  - 2015 CCRI Score is less than 2014 CCRI Score

Traditional high schools with 4-year adjusted cohort graduation rates above 60% in any of the last three years cannot be identified as "below average" for low graduation rates

Low Graduation Rate**
- 2015 4-year graduation rate less than 60% AND
- 2014 4-year graduation rate less than 60% AND
- 2013 4-year graduation rate less than 60% AND
- 2015 Dropout rate in the highest quartile

**Credit Recovery Alternative Schools excluded

The outlined criteria apply to "below average" identification based on the 2014-2015 school year alone – these schools are required to submit an updated school improvement plan to ADE. Since below average schools were scored "below average" in the 2014 A-F Letter Grade system, most schools which meet the "below average" criteria for FY2015 already comply with school improvement requirements for federal and/or state purposes. ADE will update the criteria previously approved for ESEA flexibility in order to identify schools for targeted and/or comprehensive support using two years of AzMERIT data (tests administered during the 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 school years). ADE will provide as much transparency and guidance as possible once policy decisions and pending legislation which impact the use of student growth scores in school and district accountability are finalized.

The state's indefinite delay of SGP data may also impact local use in educator evaluations and other high-stakes decisions; however, schools may use lagged or other appropriate proxies allowable under local, state, and federal guidelines.

Title I Underperforming Schools Identification

What does "Option A" mean for Arizona?

In response to ESSA requirements for an "orderly transition", Arizona selected the option to "freeze" the list of schools eligible for 1003(a) funds in lieu of identifying a new list of schools for the 16-17 school year. This means the Priority and Focus School list submitted to the US Department of Education in Arizona's 2014-2015 request for ESEA flexibility will remain in effect, and spring 2016 AzMERIT data will be used to identify other eligible schools. ADE will tier support for newly identified schools as well as schools previously identified under the former A-F and Reward, Focus, Priority system.

What does "Comprehensive Support" mean for Title I schools?
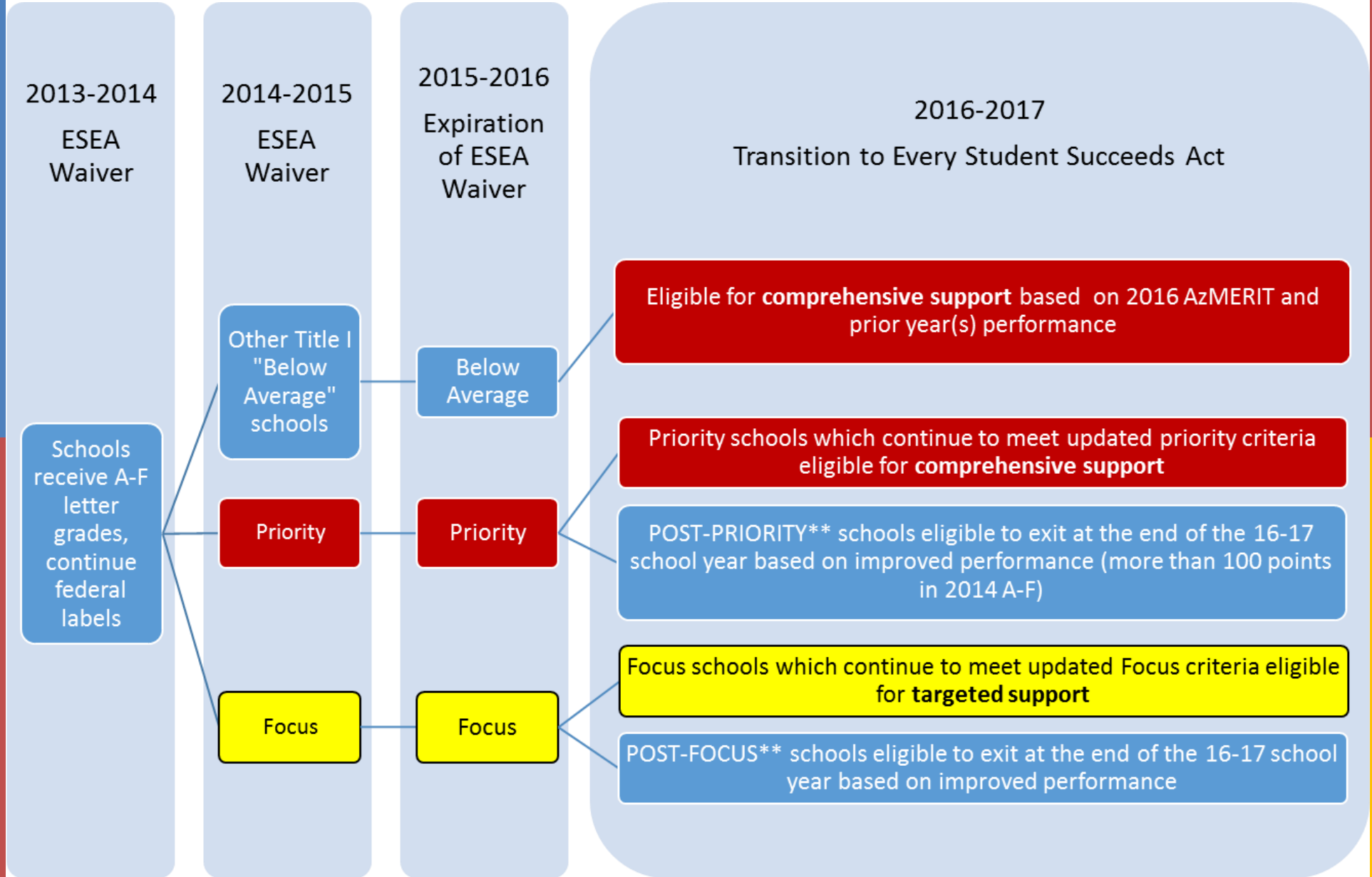
ESSA requires the state to identify at least 5% of all schools to receive comprehensive support for low performance; these schools were previously referred to as "Priority" schools. Schools in need of comprehensive and/or targeted support may apply for Title I 1003(a) funding based on 2016 AzMERIT performance as well as the school's performance and improvement status from prior years.

A school which was previously identified as Focus or Priority based on prior A-F or AIMS data from previous years may have shown significant improvement since their initial identification. ADE will identify Focus and Priority schools which are no longer amongst the lowest performing in the state or no longer have the largest achievement gaps with community recognition and continued technical support in order to sustain improvement.

What does "Targeted Support" mean for Title I schools?

The state is also required to identify schools for targeted support and improvement; these schools were previously referred to as "Focus" schools. Schools in need of comprehensive and/or targeted support may apply for Title I 1003(a) funding based on 2016 AzMERIT performance as well as the school's performance and improvement status from prior years.

Title I Underperforming Schools Identification (Continued)

2013-2014
ESEA Waiver

2014-2015
ESEA Waiver

2015-2016
Expiration of ESEA Waiver

2016-2017
Transition to Every Student Succeeds Act

Schools receive A-F letter grades, continue federal labels

Other Title I "Below Average" schools → Below Average → Eligible for **comprehensive support** based on 2016 AzMERIT and prior year(s) performance

Priority → Priority →
- Priority schools which continue to meet updated priority criteria eligible for **comprehensive support**
- POST-PRIORITY** schools eligible to exit at the end of the 16-17 school year based on improved performance (more than 100 points in 2014 A-F)

Focus → Focus →
- Focus schools which continue to meet updated Focus criteria eligible for **targeted support**
- POST-FOCUS** schools eligible to exit at the end of the 16-17 school year based on improved performance

Title I Underperforming Schools Identification (Continued)

What is a "below average" school?

A school with a "below average" level of performance received less than 100 A-F points in the 2014 A-F Letter Grade Accountability System – the last year in which letter grades were assigned – and also continued to perform amongst the lowest in the state in 2015 and 2016. A school with a "below average" level of performance may not have been a "Priority" school before 2014 but demonstrated below average performance in the last year the school received a letter grade and tested on AIMS. Although "below average" schools may not have been labeled "Priority", schools identified as "below average" in 2015 and 2016 with the lowest student achievement in the state may become eligible for comprehensive support. Schools in need of comprehensive and/or targeted support may apply for Title I 1003(a) funding based on 2016 AzMERIT performance as well as the school's performance and improvement status from prior years.

What is a POST-Priority or POST-Focus school?

A school which was previously identified as Focus or Priority based on prior A-F or AIMS data from previous years may have shown significant improvement since their initial Identification. ADE will identify Focus and Priority schools which are no longer amongst the lowest performing in the state or no longer have the largest achievement gaps with community recognition and continued technical support in order to sustain improvement.

Proficient Students Appearing on SDELL73 Report

There are a few students who have a proficient AZELLA test record but are still appearing on the SDELL73 Report. ADE's IT Department is working to identify the cause, in the meantime do not test these students. This summer when you complete your LEA Reason and ELL Amendment applications, if this student is on your applications, simply enter "student has a Proficient test record on" along with date of the proficient score from last year.

Student Counts Report

The Student Counts Report can be accessed through ADEConnect. The Student Counts Report (which can be utilized in both a summary and a detail listing) gives a breakdown, within a specific fiscal year, of the academic year test dates as well as which students were enrolled in a specific school and/or district at that time. In the summary view the Student Counts Report is broken down by cohort or grade for various sub-groups. In the detail view LEAs can see students by first and last name and SAIS ID. To access the Student Counts Report log into [ADEConnect](#), select Accountability then scroll down and click on Statewide Assessment Participation Lists, from here a fiscal year selection can be made as well as the specific test date, then summary or detail view.

| ome | Accountability Profile | ADE Connect Portal |

Student Counts Report

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Student Count Report Summary for Fiscal Year 2016

Report Generated on : 3/7/2016 11:42:23 AM
Testing Date : 10/26/2015

District/ Entity ID	School/ Entity ID	Grade or Cohort	Total Students	Hispanic	African American	American Indian	Asian	Pacific Islander	White	Multiple Races	ELL	FRL	Homeless	RALEP	FEP	SPED
		3	565	330	30	6	4	2	175	18	39	187	0		31	69
		4	562	313	52	9	7	1	163	17	48	162	0		17	84
		5	553	342	43	3	2	1	151	11	32	167	0		13	63
		6	590	340	56	2	8	1	165	18	28	167	1		18	61
		7	570	303	67	3	6	1	175	15	21	157	0		9	77
		8	557	329	60	6	5	1	150	6	16	167	0		9	75

Please verify these numbers for your school before FY16 data are final on 6/30/2016.

Customer Service Feedback

Providing a helpful and efficient experience to our stakeholders is important to us. The Accountability Section serves diverse districts and charter holders statewide. We are here to help you navigate through new educational policies and legislation concerning accountability. Any questions can be addressed through our section email. We will continue to update our website along with our newsletters on information as it becomes available. Let us know how we can better serve you and help us improve by sending any concerns, questions, or feedback to our Achieve@azed.gov.

Dates for FAY and Test Participation

FAY students are enrolled on the <u>initial</u> <u>date</u> of student enrollment AND test date(s).

School Type	Initial Date of Student Enrollment	Test Type		
		AZELLA	AzMERIT/NCSC ELA & Math **(CBT and PBT)**	AIMS Science and AIMS A Science
Traditional non-AOI	First 10 days of calendar start date	03/25/2016	03/28/2016	03/14/2016
Alternative non-AOI	10/1	03/25/2016	03/28/2016	03/14/2016
AOI	75% of instructional minutes by grade level accrued starting 7/1	03/25/2016	03/28/2016	03/14/2016

Non-FAY students enroll after initial date but are enrolled at the school on/before test date may be required to test based on student need and/or course enrolment. All students enrolled in a tested grade on test date may be required to test.

Frequently Asked Questions

Are aggregated test results reported by grade level or by assessment type for non-high school End of Course (EOC) testing?

Results are reported by test content, regardless of student grade. For example: If a student in 8th Grade takes the EOC test on Algebra II, that student's results will be included in Algebra II reporting.

Where can I find information about the Every Student Succeeds Act?

The U.S. Department of Education has posted a set of Frequently Asked Questions concerning the transition and full implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) here. More resources can be found here.

For more Frequently Asked Questions, visit our FAQs Page.